

tonight, if he is watching, he would be very proud of her efforts in this regard and in so many others, leading the fight to try to stop the assaults on human dignity.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a much younger man, I entered the Sinai Desert in Egypt. The year was 1979. I was a college student. At the site of the fighting that had taken place between Israel and Egypt in the 1973 war, there was an all-too-familiar scene of a concrete pile of rubble. Scrawled on the side of the concrete pile, both in Arabic and in English, were the words: "Here was the war, and here is the peace."

Mr. Speaker, maybe, just maybe, on this, the remnants of this Christian church where this cross was planted by this Yazidi man who returned to his hometown of Sinjar just recently in January, one day will see those same words that here was the war, but now here is the peace.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 2426.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRAT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS—THE WORK CONTINUES: WHY VOTING MATTERS IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to add any extraneous materials relevant to the subject matter of this discussion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening for tonight's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour: The Work Continues—Why Voting Matters in the African American Community.

I am so proud to join my classmate, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES from the Eighth District of New York. He is a member of the House Judiciary Committee. He continues to be a tireless advocate for social justice, working to reform our criminal justice system and to eliminate the overcriminalization of the African American community.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to discuss the current state of voting rights in America, which, unfortunately, are under assault. The freedom to vote is one of America's most fundamentally, constitutionally guaranteed rights. It was 51 years ago this month, Mr. Speaker, that over 600 peaceful, orderly protesters set off to march from Selma, Alabama, to the State capitol in Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the State.

Last week, our Congressional Black Caucus chair, Chairman BUTTERFIELD, stated at the first in a series of CBC hearings about the current state of voting rights in America and that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is probably one of the most significant pieces of legislation that was ever passed in the United States Congress.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as we know, in 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down this crucial provision of the Voting Rights Act in the Shelby County v. Holder decision. Our work continues because by invalidating section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, the Supreme Court opened the doors for ways to reduce the voting power of minority communities and it put in place new voting restrictions in an effort to make it harder for millions of Americans to vote.

Our democracy has far too many missing voices, particularly those who are already at a disadvantage due to deep-rooted racial and class barriers in our society. By exercising our right, we can do great things. We can hold this country accountable. We can advocate for legislation that supports social and economic progress, equality and fairness for all Americans. We can champion policies that create and sustain jobs and that protect against cuts to social and economic programs that are vital to our most at-risk populations. We can move forward on efforts to address the school-to-prison pipeline and criminal justice reform. We know that the inequalities in access to quality health care still exist between races and that more and more Black children are victims of failing schools.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on all citizens, including on our community and national leaders, to join the Congressional Black Caucus to work to eliminate voter suppression and to restore what so many people fought for, marched, and died for—yes, the Voting Rights Act. It is up to all of us to protect the most at-risk among us and to expand opportunity for all people. That begins with passing a voting rights act. Our work still continues, Mr. Speaker.

This week, we are celebrating Women's History Month, and I must note the powerful impact that African American women are having at the polls. In the past two Presidential elections, Black women led all demographic groups in voter turnout. That is why voting matters to African American communities. Black women make up the most dynamic segment of the rising American voters. A great civil rights leader said that women are

among the greatest leaders of social reform, and they are fighting, literally fighting, for their political rights.

This past Saturday I had the opportunity to be with the mothers of the movement. We know who they are. They are the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Dontre Hamilton, Jordan Davis, Sandra Bland, and Hadiya Pendleton; and we have all heard what happened to their children.

As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, we are calling for action on gun control. We need to do more than just stand up on this floor for a moment of silence. We need to make sure that we are passing gun control legislation, commonsense legislation, that keeps the guns out of the hands of the most dangerous individuals. It is time for us to protect our children.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to give you some examples of what we should include in our call for action.

I go first to my good friend and colleague and classmate who brought it to my attention that we stand up for a moment, and then we sit down. Then we come back to this floor, and it is business as usual. We talk about wanting to keep our families safe, and we talk about the mental health issues. That is all we do, Mr. Speaker. We talk about it.

Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY of Illinois' Second District has legislation, H.R. 224, which would require the Surgeon General of Public Health Services to submit to Congress an annual report on the effects of gun violence on public health. This bill has 140 Democrat cosponsors. I am asking my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to step up and do more than just stand up for 30 seconds.

I am calling on Congress to act on Congressman JAMES CLYBURN of the Sixth District of South Carolina's legislation, H.R. 3051, the Background Check Completion Act, which would guarantee that no gun is sold by a licensed dealer until a background check is completed.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that I am a cosponsor of both of these bills.

I will go on and tell you about Chairman BUTTERFIELD, the chair of our Congressional Black Caucus. He understands that our work continues, because he has focused his efforts on promoting anti-poverty programs and on expanding economic development and job creation. There are a number of things that have happened in his State.

For example, the Moral Mondays are protests in North Carolina that are led by religious progressives. These protests are in response to several actions by the government of North Carolina, which was elected into office in 2013. These events, which spread throughout the South, helped bring attention to voting rights, criminal justice reform, and workers' rights. I think it is very important for us to note that.

Mr. Speaker, tonight my coanchor and I will talk about a number of